No. 464 of 1863.

To

THE REVENUE COMMISIONER, N.D.

Ahmedabad Collector's Office, 3rd June 1863.

SIR

In continuation of my letter No. 272, of March 27, I have the honour to forward a memorandum showing more precisely the necessity for, and nature of, the survey of the City of Ahmedabad which I propose, and the method by which the cost may be defrayed.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) T. C. HOPE,
Acting Collector.

MEMORANDUM.

Within the walls of the City of Ahmedabad there is a very large quantity of ground which is not built upon.

Part of this is arable, and is entered in the Revenue Records as the village of Chotee Duskrohee. It has been measured and classed by the Revenue Survey, but no new assessment has been imposed owing to various questions regarding alienated portions of it, and assessment payable on it, being still pending in consequence chiefly of the difficulty of deciding how to provide for the rights of Government in the event of the land being built upon.

The rest of the land (and it is very extensive) consists of open spaces by the side of roads, between houses or properties, sites of old native houses the owners of which are not traceable, &c., &c.

It is the practice for the Collector to sell by auction any piece which is applied for.

Many pieces of ground which are known to have belonged to Chotee Duskrohee have been unauthorizedly built upon, and although the authorities do their best to prevent encroachments the absence of boundary marks renders the task a difficult one, and the value of the land is a great incentive to corrupt parties. It is therefore feared that encroachments still go on to some extent.

The rest of the land not in Chotee Duskrohee is being appropriated almost daily by persons who have titles of the most doubtful description. In a couple of nights people will have run a mud and brick wall round a space of perhaps half an acre, and the

encroachment is not perceived at all. Many places have thus been appropriated within my personal knowledge. Again, a man against whom a decree has been passed in a civil court points out some open space as his property, and it is sold in satisfaction of the decree. Finally, two parties in collusion to obtain a sort of title to a piece of ground get it sold in satisfaction of a decree in a suit which one brings against the other, and the latter allows to go against him by default. These are illustrations of the modes practised. There are many others.

Thus the rights of Government are suffering to a greater or less extent in both kinds of land, and will continue to do so till some satisfactory arrangement is made, for land is rapidly rising in value. A good deal of the time of the municipal and revenue authorities is moreover taken up in enquiries into encroachments, which are very troublesome and can rarely be decided satisfactorily. At the same time the chance of being proceeded against, and the necessity of resorting to irregular expedients, act as a check on the transfer of property and the increase of the city.

To remove all the above difficulties it appears very necessary to—

1*st*.—To complete for the whole city the map already in part made by the Revenue Survey and showing Chotee Duskrohee.

2*nd*.—To fix the breadth of all streets, squares, &c., &c., and reserve ground for such hereafter when necessary.

3*rd*.—To mark out all the remaining land with suitable boundary marks to be entered in the map.

4*th*.—To enquire into all claims to such land and enter it accordingly as wholly alienated, partly alienated, or Government.

5*th*.—To fix a suitable assessment on the two latter descriptions varying according to whether they are cultivated or built upon, with provisions that actual occupants of a certain standing may redeem the assessment at so many years' purchase, and that the right of occupancy of vacant land wanted for building purposes may be sold by auction in accordance with the Kurrachee rules.

6*th*.—To register deeds relating to house property in the manner adopted in Kurrachee.

7*th*.—In order to carry out the above, an experienced officer of the Revenue Survey Department, on a salary of Rs. 400 to 500 per mensem, with the usual measuring establishment, should be placed at the disposal of the Collector for one year.

8*th*.—The undersigned has ascertained that, in the event of Government being pleased to cede to the Municipality of

Ahmedabad the sale proceeds of the right of occupancy of building sites put up to auction, as has been done at Kurrachee (*vide* page 108 of Mr. Bellasis' account of the Kurrachee Municipality), that body will be willing to defray all the expenses of the survey.

(Signed) T. C. HOPE.

(True copy)
A. GORDON.

No. 3044.

EXTRACT from the Proceedings of the Government of Bombay, in the Revenue Department, dated 9th September 1863.

Read the following letter from Mr. B. H. Ellis, Revenue and Police Commissioner, N.D., No. 1741, dated 27th June 1863 :—

A portion of the land within the walls of the City of Ahmedabad is called Chotee Duskrohee. A correspondence has for some time been going on with regard to the settlement of Chotee Duskrohee, the assessment of land within the city walls being necessarily fixed on different principles from those adopted in assessing lands valuable only for cultivation.

2. In the course of this correspondence Mr. Hope has written as follows :—

No. 272, dated 27th March 1863.

"Independently of the lands termed Chotee Duskrohee there are within the city walls a very large number of open spaces, some with traces of Mahomedan buildings on them, others without; some claimed by various parties, and others not; and further the roads are in many directions so irregular in width that it would be a positive improvement to cut off surplus land and devote it to building purposes.

"3*rd*.—The settlement of Chotee Duskrohee having been so long deferred, and there being no trustworthy record of lands not included in it, while, at the same time, the prosperity of the city is such as to cause a great demand for building sites, houses are springing up in all directions on ground to which the builders have very doubtful titles, or often none at all, cases of encroachment take up a good deal of time of both revenue and municipal authorities, and can rarely be decided satisfactorily; and it is to be feared that many important ones are never reported at all, and the same time the insecurity of tenure and chance of being proceeded against act as a check on the increase of the city.